REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-35 and 44-46 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5, 7, 15-33, 35 and 44-46 are allowed. Claims 8 – 14 and 34 are rejected. Claims 8, 10 and 34 are currently amended.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action dated June 19, 2007, the Examiner allowed claims 1-5, 7, 15-33, 35 and 44-46. Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 1-5, 7, 15-33, 35 and 44-46. However, it is respectfully pointed out that the allowed claims are not listed in the Office Action Summary, under "Disposition of Claims", in paragraph 5.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 8-14 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

More specifically, the Examiner asserted that claim 8 lacks an antecedent basis for the limitation "another said second object", and that claim 10 lacks an antecedent basis for the limitation "said second object".

Claims 8 and 10, as currently amended, no longer recite the limitations mentioned above, and are believed allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejects claims 8-14, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. 103(b) as being unpatentable over Sato et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,388,667 (hereinafter: *Sato*) in view of Matsuda at al U.S. Patent No. 6,734,885 (hereinafter: *Matsuda*).

In the light of the Examiner's remarks, in order to emphasize the inventiveness of the present claims in the light of the prior art, Applicant has amended independent claims 8 and 34. Accordingly, Applicant believes that *Sato* in view of *Matsuda* does not render obvious the amended independent claims 8 and 34 and related dependent claims 9-12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 29, and 30.

Claim 8, as currently amended, defines a server adapted to communicate with a remote client, the server implementing a virtual computing environment, the virtual computing environment comprising: a plurality of virtual objects and a functionality for avoiding undesirable loops by preventing consequential interaction of a first one of the virtual objects with a second one of the virtual objects when the number of interacting objects involved in the consequential interaction reaches a predefined maximum, wherein the interacting objects include the first virtual object and second virtual object, and any virtual object intermediating between the first virtual object and second virtual object.

The present application, as defined by claim 8, teaches the novel and inventive idea of a server, which implements a virtual computing environment, comprising a plurality of virtual objects. The environment comprises functionality for avoiding undesirable loops, by preventing *consequential* interaction of a first one of the virtual objects with a second one of the virtual objects when the number of virtual objects involved in the

consequential interaction, ~~including the first and second virtual objects, and any virtual object intermediating between the first and second object, reaches a predefined maximum~~ (see lines 10-20 in page 40 of the present application).

By restricting the of *consequential* interaction, the method aims at solving an inherent problem with allowing selected objects to have relationships with other objects in their vicinity, in that interacting with an object may result in a consequential further reaction with one or more objects, the consequential reaction being carried out over one or more virtual objects intermediating between a first and a second object in a "chain reaction". With the present invention, there may be avoided the consequential further reactions' resulting in uncontrollable or undesirable consequences and knock on effects, as a result of the other objects themselves having relationships with further objects, see page 39, lines 18-25 of the present application.

In the Office Action dated June 19, 2007, the Examiner noted that neither Sato nor Matsuda teaches that restricting the number of interactions would avoid undesirable loops.

However, the Examiner also asserted that the phrase "thereby avoiding undesirable loops" is nonfunctional descriptive material and would not distinguish the claimed invention from prior art, in terms of patentability.

Applicant maintains claim 8 as currently amended, which recites the functional phrase" *avoiding undesirable loops, by preventing* consequential interaction of a first one of the virtual objects with a second one of the virtual objects when the number of interacting objects involved in the consequential interaction reaches a predefined maximum, wherein

the interacting objects include the first virtual object and second virtual object, and any virtual object mediating between the first virtual object and second virtual object", is patentable over the prior art, and should be ~~allowed~~.

More specifically, Applicant maintains that neither Sato nor Matsuda teaches or even hints at the novel and inventive idea of *avoiding undesirable loops*, *by* preventing the consequential interaction when the number of virtual objects involved in the consequential reaction reaches a predefined maximum, as taught by the present application, and defined by claim 8.

It is thus believed that claim 8 is both novel and inventive over the prior art, and respectfully maintained that claim 8 should be allowed.

The arguments made above with respect to the non-obviousness of claim 8 apply *mutatis mutandis* to independent amended claim 34.

Dependent claims 9-14 are believed allowable as being dependent on allowable main claim.

All of the matters raised by the Examiner have been dealt with and are believed to have been overcome.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims now pending in the application are allowable. An early Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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